As a medical student, do you ever wonder what it’s like to be a vascular surgeon? Here’s your chance to find out.

Meet Faisal Aziz, MD, a vascular surgeon, educator and featured physician in AMA Wire’s® “Shadow Me” Specialty Series, which offers advice directly from physicians about life in their specialties.

Read his insights to help determine whether a career in vascular surgery might be a good fit for you.

“Shadowing” Dr. Aziz

Specialty: Vascular surgery

Practice setting: Academic university hospital

Employment type: Employed
Years in practice: 4

A typical week in my practice:
A typical day involves making rounds, seeing patients in the outpatient setting or doing surgical operations. Workweek hours are variable, depending on the duration of operations.

The most challenging and rewarding aspects of caring for patients in vascular surgery:
Patients who require vascular surgery operations are generally sicker patients with multiple medical comorbidities. The most challenging aspect is complex anatomy and extremely complicated post-operative course. The most rewarding feeling is saving somebody’s life or limb or preventing stroke by doing operations and bringing them back to their baseline.

Three adjectives that describe the typical physician in vascular surgery:
Meticulous. Attention to detail. Dedication.

One skill every physician in training should have for vascular surgery but won’t be tested for on the board exam:
Technical skills to do surgical operations.

One question physicians in training should ask before pursuing vascular surgery:
Am I dedicated to taking complete care of these very complex patients?

Three books every medical student interested in vascular surgery should read:
- *Essentials of General Surgery* by Peter Lawrence, MD
- *Current Surgical Diagnosis and Treatment* by Lawrence Way, MD
- *The Student’s Textbook of Surgery* by William Rambo, MD

Online resources students interested in my specialty should follow:
- Vascular Web, the website of the Society for Vascular Surgery

One quick tip I'd give students who are considering vascular surgery:
Apply for the Society for Vascular Surgery student scholarship, and attend the annual meeting to get all your questions answered about this specialty.

Want to learn more about your specialty options?
Read more profiles in AMA Wire’s "Shadow Me" Specialty Series to learn additional insights from physicians in such specialties as infectious disease, adolescent medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation, radiology and orthopedic surgery, among others.
Check out the AMA’s *Choosing a Medical Specialty* resource guide (member log in required).

Be sure to avoid these 5 common mistakes students make when choosing a specialty.